

## PUGET SOUND LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Sept. 18, 2013

*This Legislative Update highlights the issues impacting our region's work to protect and restore the health of Puget Sound. Previous editions are available online at [www.psp.wa.gov](http://www.psp.wa.gov).*

### Developing a 2014 Puget Sound regional legislative agenda

Organizations throughout the region are currently working to refine their individual legislative requests for 2014. Here at the Partnership we are working with our boards to coordinate, align and advance the issues most important for Puget Sound protection and restoration. Our end goal is to develop a unified, regional legislative agenda that 1) advances the Strategic Initiatives and other priorities outlined in the Action Agenda, and 2) is informed by our partners and their constituents.

On Thursday, Sept. 19, Ecosystem Coordination Board members will provide a high-level update on legislative priorities related to Puget Sound recovery that their caucuses are developing and discuss next steps, which are outlined in the meeting materials at: [http://www.psp.wa.gov/EB\\_meetings.php](http://www.psp.wa.gov/EB_meetings.php).

### Breaking ground, restoring the health of Puget Sound

Local, state and federal partners gathered at Burien's Seahurst Park on Monday, Sept. 16, to celebrate the groundbreaking of the largest seawall removal effort in Puget Sound. We appreciate everyone who is working together to improve this important nearshore habitat, invest in jobs, and expand public recreational access.

This project will restore an additional 2,800 feet of shoreline and is a significant step toward achieving the regional targets in the Puget Sound Action Agenda. The Seahurst project ranked number three among the regional projects prioritized by the Partnership to receive Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration funding (PSAR). In 2013, the Legislature appropriated \$70 million for PSAR, which was Puget Sound's number one Capital Budget priority. These funds enable our region's local watershed groups to implement the science-based watershed plans developed by a broad regional coalition of local jurisdictions, Tribes, businesses, farmers, environmental groups, and government agencies.

## 2014 SESSION PREPARATION

### Information:

- The Legislature will convene Jan. 13, 2014
- For up-to-date legislative information, visit: [www.leg.wa.gov](http://www.leg.wa.gov)
- To watch or listen to a legislative hearing or work session, visit: [www.tvw.org](http://www.tvw.org)
- Puget Sound Legislative Updates are available at: [http://www.psp.wa.gov/legislative\\_updates.php](http://www.psp.wa.gov/legislative_updates.php)

### Communication & Coordination:

If you are planning to meet with legislators or would like assistance with state legislative issues regarding Puget Sound priorities, please contact:

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The Partnership thanks Burien City Councilwoman Joan McGilton, Col. Bruce Estok, Sen. Sharon Nelson, Rep. Dave Upthegrove and Pete Mills on behalf of Congressman Jim McDermott for speaking at the event. We also appreciate the many other elected leaders in attendance, including Rep. Joe Fitzgibbon, King County Councilmember Joe McDermott, and many others. Photos of the project and groundbreaking event are available on Facebook: <http://on.fb.me/16fbz68>.

## LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

**Human health water quality standards** (*Fish consumption rate*): The Senate Energy, Environment and Telecommunications Committee will hold a work session on Fish Consumption Rates and Water Quality Standards on Monday, Sept. 23, in Olympia. The ongoing discussions about increasing water quality standards based on human health and an increased fish consumption rate could result in changes to how wastewater and stormwater are managed across the state. To support this rule revision process, Ecology is hosting a [Water Quality Policy Forum](#) and [Delegates' Table](#) to provide a structured dialog to address the complex science and public policy issues of the rulemaking. The last forum Ecology convened focused on human health criteria, regional data, policy choices, and other state's fish consumption rates. The next forum is tentatively scheduled for Nov. 6, 2013, and will focus on what is likely to be in the draft proposed rules. The complete draft rule is expected in early 2014.

**Growth management:** The House Local Government Committee will hold another work session on Oct. 7 about the Growth Management Act (GMA). The purpose is to review the goals of GMA, evaluate progress achieving the intended goals, and review options to measure and fund implementation. You can watch the previous work session on TVW at: <http://bit.ly/16fd7wS>

**Model Toxics Control Act:** The House Environment Committee will convene a work session on Oct. 23 in Olympia for an update on program funding and priorities from the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA) regarding ongoing efforts to reduce public and environmental exposures to toxic hazards. Proposed changes to MTCA were one of the most controversial debates of the legislative session. At the end of the second special session, the Senate Majority Coalition, House of Representatives, and the environmental community found a way to address major concerns in the proposed legislation and move forward.

## INTERIM ACTIVITIES FROM THE 2013 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

**Watershed funding:** Rep. John McCoy initiated a conversation earlier this summer about developing legislation to invest in local watershed priorities throughout the state. WRIA 9 was directed to convene an informal working group of watershed stakeholders to see where there is consensus on structure and governance concepts. This meeting was recently scheduled for Wednesday, Sept. 25. WRIA 9 plans to convene a broader group of stakeholders and legislators later this fall. If you have any questions, please call Doug Osterman at (206) 296-8069 or send him an email at: [Doug.Osterman@kingcounty.gov](mailto:Doug.Osterman@kingcounty.gov).

**Stormwater funding:** The 2013 Legislature invested an unprecedented amount of capital funding in low-impact development and retrofits to reduce toxic stormwater runoff. The first Stormwater Grant Program Stakeholder Workgroup meeting is scheduled for Monday, Sept. 30. The workgroup is set at 17 participants and includes representatives from the City of Spokane, City of Ellensburg, City of Redmond, Pierce County, Clark County, Snohomish County, Spokane County, Kitsap County, Association of Washington Cities, Washington Association of Counties, Washington Environmental Council, Ecology, and Puget Sound Partnership.

**Floodplain protection and restoration:** The 2013 Legislature invested significant funding—\$33 million—to advance nine floodplain priorities. Floodplains are among our region’s most valuable assets and The Nature Conservancy is working to further this legislative success by hosting a “Floodplains by Design” workshop on Oct. 2 at the Edmonds Conference Center. The purpose is to collaborate with partners over the next 12 months to identify barriers to success and develop practical solutions to those barriers, as well as develop a suite of projects needed to protect communities and restore the ecosystem in each of the major river floodplains. If you would like to attend the workshop, please call Jim Kramer at (206) 841-2145 or send him an email at: [jkramer.consulting@gmail.com](mailto:jkramer.consulting@gmail.com).

**Transportation forums:** The Senate Transportation Committee Co-Chairs, Sen. Tracey Eide and Sen. Curtis King, will convene a series of transportation forums across the state. The forums are a follow-up to the failure to pass a transportation revenue package during the 2013 legislative session. These forums will provide an opportunity to continue the work on transportation revenue and prepare for future legislative action. A special session may be scheduled for later this fall. The following transportation forums will occur in the evening, from 6 to 9 pm and will include presentations from regional transportation officials, as well as opportunities for the public to comment:

- **Tuesday, Sept. 17 – Seattle/Bellevue** (Northwest Region)  
Stevenson Elementary School, 14220 N.E. 8th St., Bellevue
- **Wednesday, Sept. 18 – Everett** (Northwest Region)  
Snohomish County, Robert Drewel Building, 3000 Rockefeller Ave., 6th floor, Everett
- **Monday, Sept. 23 – Wenatchee** (North Central Region)  
Chelan County PUD Auditorium, 327 N. Wenatchee Ave., Wenatchee
- **Tuesday, Sept. 24 – Yakima** (South Central Region)  
Yakima Area Arboretum, Garden View Room, 1401 Arboretum Dr., Yakima
- **Wednesday, Oct. 2 – Spokane** (Eastern Region)  
Greater Spokane Inc., 801 W. Riverside, Spokane
- **Monday, Oct. 7 – Vancouver** (Southwest Region)  
Vancouver Community Library, Columbia Room, 901 C St., Vancouver
- **Wednesday, Oct. 9 – Tacoma** (Olympic Region)  
Evergreen Tacoma Campus, Lyceum Hall, 1210 6th Ave., Tacoma

**Climate change:** The Climate Legislative and Executive Workgroup was established in the 2013 session to recommend actions and policies by Dec. 31, 2013, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to ensure achievement of the state's emissions targets in state law. Workgroup meetings are open to the public and three meetings have been scheduled in October and December to receive public input. Details are available at:

<http://1.usa.gov/18Y23Y1>

**Coal trains:** The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the state Department of Ecology and Whatcom County are conducting a coordinated environmental review of the Pacific International and BNSF applications under the [National Environmental Policy Act](#) and the [State Environmental Policy Act](#). The agencies have determined that the proposed export terminal and associated rail expansion require an [environmental impact statement](#) (EIS). The lead agencies are responsible for identifying and evaluating how the proposed project would affect the environment. When complete, the EIS will inform the public and decision makers about the impacts of the proposed projects and will specifically identify potential environmental impacts, various alternatives, and possible mitigation measures. The steps in the environmental review process and estimated timeline are available at: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/geographic/gatewaypacific>.